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ABSTRACT

An anthropological analysis of the phenomenon of citizenship education in the United States is summarized in this paper. Since school ethnography lacks depth in its use of anthropological theory, an attempt is made to overcome this deficiency by applying five theoretical approaches (evolutionary, functionalist, structuralist-functionalist, structuralist, and cultural ecology) to the study of citizenship education. The cultural diversity within a pluralistic society creates an amorphous condition for citizenship education and the continuous attempts to resolve the conflicts associated with this condition produce a form of dynamism which has high survival value in a rapidly changing society. It is suggested that a move be made from myth to the reality of citizenship education through more naturalistic research. As the individuals move from membership in a tribal society to membership in a modern state and a global community, their relationship to the state is altered dramatically. (BZ)

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

John H. Chilcott

June 1986

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"Anthropological Perspectives on Citizenship Education"

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Anthropology is unique among the social sciences; its holistic, naturalistic study of the human condition provides a broad-based perspective on reality. The methodology of anthropology was strongly influenced by 19th century positivism and more recently by logical positivism, and traditionally required an extended period of fieldwork (sometimes as long as several years) in a foreign country. The anthropologist attempted to describe the culture (or prehistory in terms of archaeology) of a small society.

As anthropologists turned from studying tribal societies in remote areas of the globe to studying modern societies, they began to use the same research techniques to study "school culture." (Chilcott, Khleif, Wolcott) In fact, ethnographic research has become involved in the "great debate" between quantitative and qualitative research recently reported in many educational research journals.

This paper is an attempt to perform an anthropological analysis on the phenomenon of Citizenship Education in the US public schools. Unfortunately, much school ethnography lacks depth in the use of anthropological theory in its interpretation. I will attempt to overcome this deficiency by providing five theoretical approaches to the study of Citizenship Education.

For this analysis I selected several documents: texts, study guides, essays, and policy statements much as the archaeologist would select a clay pot, or the cultural anthropologist a tool, idol, or magical incantation for analysis within its cultural setting. These documents were collected from supervisors and teachers in the Tucson area. Had there been more time to conduct this study, it would have been beneficial to observe the use of these documents in the classroom to ascertain how they were being interpretated by the teachers and the students, and to determine if they were being influenced by the local community and the state political institutions and parties. The size of the sample appeared to be adequate because of redundancy in content.

I will turn now to a brief description of the five anthropological perspectives which I should like to use to analyze citizenship education at the end of this paper.

Evolutionary Perspective:

In its infancy anthropology was influenced by biology. Physical anthropologists are interested in human evolution, human heredity, and the triadic relationship between environment, culture, and human biology. The notion of increasing complexity and the development of qualitative jumps or stages in human evolution was applied to culture as well. One such neo-evolutionist, Elman Service, using the concept of mechanisms of socio-cultural integration developed the taxonomy of:

Band
Tribe
Chiefdom
Primitive State

To which I would add: Modern State
Global State

The major mechanism for social integration at the Band level (usually hunters and gatherers) is kinship. Everyone in the group is related to everyone else. Outsiders are adopted into the group and provided with a kin term. Kinship requires obligations and customary relationships between kin, i.e. mother-in-law taboo. Citizenship, therefore, is based on membership in the kin group. The society is egocentric; one starts with himself and moves outward to more distant kin. Leadership emerges during periods of crisis such as warfare or sickness and is usually based upon charisma.

At the Tribe level, usually a collection of bands, other mechanisms of social integration appear and are referred to as pan-tribal sodalities. These may be clans, or warrior and religious societies. Some are based on kinship, others not, yet kinship remains the major integrating force. Leadership may become hereditary, but requires substantiation on the part of the inheritor in order to remain in a position of authority. The economic forces of integration at both the band and tribe levels, is barter or gift-giving with the notion of reciprocity. That is, if I give you my favorite knife today, someday in the future you are required to return something you value to me. It is from this practice that the idea of "Indian giving" appeared in our society. The sharing of food and goods appears to have high survival value among people at these levels.

Significant qualitative changes in the form of social integration appear at the Chiefdom level. With an increase in size of the group, other forces of integration are required. Usually these societies appear only with a corresponding increase in the dependability of a food supply. Kinship remains important, particularly if you are related to the chief, but allegiance to the chief now becomes necessary to incorporate non-kin into the society. Ranking of status now appears with paramount chiefs, village chiefs, and sub chiefs down the line to commoners and eventually, in some societies, slaves. Slavery was a mechanism to incorporate non-citizens into the society. Leadership is hereditary and often substantiated by religious authority, but if people become dissatisfied with the leadership of their chief they can transfer their allegiance to another chief. (1) Thus the chief rules by consensus. Specialization appears at this level: priests, craftsmen, etc. serve the chief and are supported by him. While gift-giving and bartering still exist, goods also are produced for the benefit of the chief and to be

redistributed back to the producers at times of feasts and ceremonies. In this fashion scarce goods move through the population and the people are insured of some food and shelter in order to survive.

Another qualitative leap occurs at the Primitive state level as we are now talking about populations that may reach hundres of thousands. Furthermore, up until now the societies have been culturally homogeneous. Everyone wears pretty much the same clothing as everyone else with the chief's being merely more elaborate. The primitive state incorporates people of diverse cultures, diverse languages, and diverse geographic regions. To accomplish this task a new set of mechanisms of social integration is required: an army, a legal system, a court system, a market system, a form of taxation, and a bureaucracy to administer the state. Kinship ties no longer can provide sufficient integration. One is no longer egocentric but sociocentric. The allegiance now is to the social group or groups in which one participates. Instead of perceiving oneself first and others in terms of their distance to you, one's perception is in terms of a social rank. Group and status has replaced kinship as the major force of integration. Allegiance is now to an impersonal king or emperor.

In the Modern state there is an increase in the number of social units and laws designed to integrate the individual as a member of society. The tremendously complex infrastructure of an industrial economy also serves to cement the society. Allegiance is to an institution rather than a king or the family. One problem facing many of us today is the conflict of allegiance to either the family or our job. Which comes first? It has been suggested that during the past decade that the so called Yuppy has allegiance to only themselves. They lack a commitment to political and economic institutions which serve to integrate them into society. This may also be said to be true of other individuals in our society such as transients.

After a period of time anthropologists studying isolated tribal people discovered that the tribal people were really not so isolated. They were influenced by regional and international capitalism. These influences varied from the destruction of their forest environment as in the Amazon and Congo basins, to international price fixing on their crops, to modernization through new roads, transitor radios, and western clothing. In this sense even the most remote human is a member of the global community. The global leaders are the managers of the multinational corporations. If true, then the definition of citizenship needs to be revised. To whom does one owe his allegiance in the global community?

A FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE:

During World War I a Polish anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski, was unable to leave the Trobriand Islands and return home. He spent his three year period of impoundment studying the culture of the local natives. Not only did he move anthropology out of the armchair, but he also founded the functionalist school of anthropology which had a profound influence on many of the social sciences of that time. He suggested that culture is made up of traits each of which provides a specific function in satisfying human needs. Using the organic homostasis model borrowed from biology, he suggested that each trait performed a specific function to stabilize society. Thus when a Trobriand Islander left on a long canoe voyage, the local medicine man performed magic over the canoe to insure a safe passage.

Malinowski also suggested that the latent function of the magic was to reduce anxiety within the individual who was leaving on the trip. Thus emerged the notions of manifest and latent functions of social institutions and cultural traits. Among the Hopi Indians of Arizona the manifest function of the Kachina dances is to bring rain to the desert, while the latent function is to provide social integration and group identity. What then are the manifest and latent functions of citizenship education?

The criticisms of the functional school reside in the fact that it cannot account for change, it cannot assure that the function will remain the same over time. Witness the function of the candle in 1780 with the function of the candle in 1980. Has the function of citizenship education changed between 1880 and 1980? Freeman Butts has suggested that it has changed. (Butts:47-67)

THE STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALIST VIEW:

Another organic model of human society was developed by the English anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown. The structural-functional theoretical position claims that society consists of various structures which are produced by a society and which contribute to maintaining the structure of the society itself. For example, what is the mother's brother's relationship with the mother's son and how does this relationship contribute to maintaining the structure of the society? (2) When this concept is applied to a school curriculum, one looks for the relationships between the parts of the curriculum and how these parts function to maintain the school society. What is the structure of the social studies curricula and how does this structure function? After examining several state study guides and courses offered in the schools, I came to the conclusion that the social studies curriculum might be described as laize faire. It appears to have grown like Topsy. Yet I would suggest that this structure is highly functional within the school setting as this type of structure serves to satisfy a wide variety of cultural expectations. This looseness also provides a good deal of flexibility to accommodate a rapidly changing society. Using this concept some aspects of the school curriculum might be perceived as dysfunctional if they are too rigid. How then was citizenship education developed and how does it relate with the other parts of the curriculum and school society? How does the structure of citizenship education solve problems in US society? In the global community?

Similar to the functionalist position, structural functionalism has temporal problems. It cannot account for change.

A STRUCTURALIST VIEW

The French anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss, formulated an analytical approach to culture based on the assumption that observed phenomena are specific instances of an underlying generalized principle of relationship or structure, sometimes referred to as below the surface structure which explains the order of the observed world or how the human mind works. The analysis develops categories with binary distinctions; life-death, man-women, good-evil, and examines the origin of these concepts usually in the form of myths. The purpose is to reveal the cultural code and method of conflict resolution. All societies are faced with the problem of life and death, but each society deals with this problem differently. Some have a great fear of ghosts, while others believe that the dead come back to earth to co-exist for a period of time amidst rejoicing and ritualistic behavior.

In the case of citizenship education, one might explore the distinction between a good and a bad citizen? Are there then myths to explain this distinction?

CULTURAL ECOLOGY

It is undeniable that historical, cultural, and ecological factors all influence the origin and functioning of societies, that culture is a mechanism by which man adapts to his environment and to other members of that environment. It may also be argued that the relationship between culture and the environment is always mediated by social organization and by symbolic and ideological processes. One such classic example is the manner in which the ideology surrounding India's sacred cow allows the peasant farmer to survive as a member of the underclass in India. (3) Using this analogy, I should like to examine the cultural allocations of power to the citizen, the ideology which reenforces this allocation, and the form of social organization which permits this allocation of power. Is it possible for the citizen to have too much power?

ANALYSIS OF DATA:

For the purposes of this paper a collection of social studies documents were collected. (Appendix A.) These documents were skimmed for portions which could be used to illustrate the five anthropological perspectives. It was not deemed necessary to make a thorough content analysis of the documents but rather to select portions which might best illustrate the use of the particular perspective, since it is the use of the perspective itself which is exemplative of the value of anthropology rather than the complete analysis, in a sense this is a pilot attempt to perceive if this approach to the study of the social studies curriculum has merit.

AN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE ON CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The comparative study of culture, as the American anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn suggested, can provide a mirror in which we can view ourselves more accurately. At the tribal level everyone is a citizen by virtue of being a member of the kin group. Social controls are exercised through specifically prescribed behavior associated with each kin including kinship obligations. Everyone participates in the economic activities of the group. Leadership is exercised through the personal qualities of an individual.

But there are no schools in tribal societies, so how and where does citizenship education take place? As might be expected the primary responsibility for the preparation of good citizens is the extended family. That does not mean that other members of the group are not included in this process. One feature of citizenship education in tribal societies is that everyone agrees as to what constitutes a good citizen. Thus a Hopi mother can admonish her misbehaving child with the statement, "that is not Hopi." Everyone knows what being "Hopi" is. With this sort of consensus as to what is a good Hopi all members of the village can participate in the socialization of the children in the village even though they might not be close kin.

Not only are all members of the society participants in the role of "citizenship education" at the tribal level, but the total enculturation process is involved, including story telling, observation and later participation in ceremonies, and

the emulation of adult roles since they are readily available for observation by the children. Conformity rather than plurality is the norm. In many of these societies the decision making process requires 100% consensus prior to any action.

As societies increase in size and begin to include non-kin and outsiders, then other mechanisms for political socialization appear including schools for the elite. In the Inca empire, for example, the children of the nobility of the conquered city states, were sent to Cuzco to be educated in the Inca language, religion, and government. Are the Soviets using the same technique today in Afghanistan? Pluralism was tolerated by the Inca state as long as the local populations accepted the Inca as divine ruler, the Inca language, the Inca government and the Inca gods as paramount over the local gods. In the late era of the Inca empire, much of the energy of the government was directed toward putting down local revolts.

As compared with tribal societies, political socialization in the US is characterized by a lack of consensus as to its goals:

"We may disagree about exactly how to do it, who is responsible for it, or how to assess it. Yet few readers would seriously question that citizenship education still lies somewhere at the core of the social studies." (Social Education: 1985)

"Despite widespread agreement as to its centrality and importance to social studies, however, there is little agreement about the meaning of citizenship, the nature of the citizen role, or the major focus of citizenship education efforts." (Morrissett:119)

It was interesting to note that the word citizen or citizenship was not included in any of the glossaries of the textbooks I analyzed. From this analysis I would suspect that if I asked each of you in this room to define "good citizen", that I would get as many definitions as there are people in the room. Compare this with the Hopi who all agree on what constitutes a "good Hopi." Since there is no agreement on goals, it is understandable that there is also a great debate as to what to include in citizenship education. Textbook publishers seem to have made up their minds for the teacher as most of them include the topics of the Presidency, Constitution, Bill of Rights, federal, state and local government, the court system, and free enterprise.

"During the eighth grade the social studies program will strive to lay the basic foundation of effective citizenship in American democracy through the study of the development and implementation of our system of government. The documents, institutions, and ideals of our society will be examined as they have changed to meet the needs of our citizens in the interdependent world of today." (Orange GroveJunior High School:1)

Again, dissimilar to the Hopi who agree on methods, the literature was full of suggestions of the "best methods" for teaching citizenship. Since modern states are pluralistic, it is understandable that there is no agreement on goals and methods of citizenship education. (Brown:1)

When it comes to citizenship in the global community the matter becomes even more confusing. I gather that at one time the social studies programs in

the US were directed toward the conflict between world socialism and capitalism, and that this has been replaced with the notion of interdependence and economic issues such as growing economic inequality, world hunger, pollution, spread of weapons, and the use of oceans. (Brown:9-13) (Patrick:501-508) Other statements on global education were vague as to how to operationalize them:

"To prepare students to be humane, rational citizens, in a global context, that is our mission as social studies teachers." (Hepburn:vii)

"Think globally while acting locally." (Parker:2)

"Citizens who can capitalize on the world's resources and accumulated wisdom in making cooperative attacks on shared problems of people everywhere." (Parker:2)

How are we to attack these problems? By holding hands?

Compared to the Hopi, the political socialization process in the US and the global community remains ill defined as to goals and means.

Question on the Gallup Citizenship test, "Where is Angola?" (Brown:213-221) As an anthropologist analyzing this item as a cultural artifact, I would wonder how the "natives" perceive this item as testing the understanding of global citizenship.

A FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE ON CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION:

The usual approach of a functionalist to analyzing cultural traits is to use the concepts of form, function, and meaning. Should an anthropologist encounter a nail for example, he would describe the shape of the nail, what materials it is constructed of, how it used to hold two pieces of wood together, and the meaning or symbol which the nail represents. In the latter case, a nail possesses a symbolic meaning of strength, firmness and finality as in "nail down the platform" in political jargon, or "hard as nails" in describing a person's personality.

In assessing the form of citizenship education, I would have to describe it as amorphous. Except for the content of social studies textbooks which appear to be rather uniform, citizenship education has been described as:

"as defined by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution." (Parker:6)

"social studies includes the teaching of political skills, syndetic skills, social causation, negotiation, leadership, and ways to overcome the shortcomings of society." (Brown:37-45)

"the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizenship." (Patrick:5)

"citizenship skills include how to influence people and how to make decisions." (Social Studies School Service:99)

"all the courses of the school should be considered as part of citizenship education, English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities, and Social Studies." (Parker:7)

The format of citizenship education varies from formal courses such as American Government and History to the development of a democratic classroom.

In a like manner the function of citizenship education is highly variable:

"to teach the ideals of American democracy." (Post:8-15)

"to develop patriotic loyal citizens." (Patrick:7)

"the democratic citizen is an informed person, skilled in the processes of a free society, who is committed to democratic values and is able, and feels obliged, to participate in social, political, and economic processes." (Parker:1)

The meaning of citizenship education appears to be related to the ideology that if the US style of participatory democracy is to survive it requires an educated citizenry, both in terms of literacy, knowledge of US history and government, and a value orientation based on equality, altruism, and citizen responsibility.

This is a description of the manifest function of citizenship education? What is the latent function or what educators sometimes refer to as the "hidden curriculum"? One cannot answer this question from an examination of documents. What is required is to observe the actual classroom and school behavior to see if they correspond to the ideals of citizenship education. Does the school promote good citizens? Without going into the details of the research on classroom behavior, I would suggest that the school, in fact, might be dysfunctional to the ideals of citizenship education. Some educators have described the school as a "sorting machine" (Spring) others as a mechanism for achieving failure. (McDermott) These conclusions certainly need further verification.

Question of the Gallup Citizenship Test: "Who was the Democratic candidate for President in 1972?" What concept of citizenship is being tested here?

A STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Some societies practice polygny. How does this structure of the family contribute to the overall welfare of the society? Polygny is common among warlike societies where the men are likely to be killed leaving widows and small children to be cared for. In these societies it is common for a man to marry the widow of his dead brother as a form of built-in social security for the society. With the Inca polygny, had two functions, one to form alliances with captured chiefs by marrying their daughters and the other to provide a population of children which could grow up to help govern the empire.

Using this analogy, how does the structure of the citizenship education program contribute to the overall structure of the school? Does the citizenship education program contribute to student and school governance? There is no way to determine this from the documents studied for this paper. The answer to the question would require some fieldwork in the schools. However, one of the documents studied did suggest that the best way to teach citizenship was through a democratic classroom and school. Although Horace Mann did object to political discussions in the school determining them as dangerous (Butts:54), they have now become rather common in social studies classrooms. What about political discussions in science classes, English classes, language classes, math classes, and vocational education classes? Clyde Kluckhohn has described the school curriculum as an English formal garden, each course separated by a high hedge from the other courses. Is this true of citizenship education?

Question on the Gallup Citizenship test: "Does a person who cannot read or write have a right to vote?" If this item is taken literally, this test would suggest that citizenship education should be a part of the total curriculum.

THE STRUCTURALIST PERSPECTIVE ON CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Do the dead live? For two days each year on one group of islands in the Pacific the islanders conduct a ceremony during which the dead return to earth and celebrate with the islanders, eating, drinking, dancing, and in general having a good time. The structuralist approach to analyzing culture is to study myths with the idea of discovering the structural relationships of the society. One could analyze the various US historical myths promolgated by social studies teachers, but that would not assist us with the task at hand.

Let me go out on a limb a bit here and suggest that we examine the myth that citizenship education produces good citizens, that if students participate in all the rituals performed on them by the high priests (the social studies teachers) they will ultimately become good citizens. There appears to be a great faith in this myth on the part of the writers of the documents which I examined. By examining this myth through the eyes of a structuralist, one could conclude that society is structured into good and bad citizens based on the criteria suggested in the citizenship program and that failures in society could be attributed to failure on the part of the bad citizens, just as the islander blames adversity on the activity of the dead during the remainder of the year assuming that their two day ritual did not please the dead. If only the bad citizens would vote, then we could overcome the abuses of big government. Is this any more of a myth than the dead coming alive?

It is not my intention here to demystify this myth as myths are important to society in that they provide symbols upon which individuals can base their behavior. In short, you need this myth to continue your work in civizenship education. Myths are reality for the native, but they also provide the structuralist the opportunity to describe the "deep structure" of the culture. Question on the Gallup Citizenship Test: "Describe the contributions of George Wallace as a world figure." (Is this a myth?)

A CULTURAL ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Cultural ecology is interested in how people use their culture to solve problems which permit them to survive. It seems to me that a pertinent topic in citizenship education for the cultural ecological perspective to explore would be the allocation of power in the US and global communities. Who has what power, on what basis, and how is this power rationalized among the population? Among tribal people power accrues to an individual with a charismatic personality or a particular skill which proves to be useful during a period of crises; disease, warfare, family quarrels. The Hawaiian chief possessed his power through "mana", an ethereal substance inherited from his ancestors and sustained through offerings to his Gods. The Inca, as did a French king, convinced the people that he was the sun god.

In the US and the global community who has what power, on what basis, how is this power sustained, and how is this distribution of power contributing to our survival? How does the global community solve the problem of distribution

of scarce resources? With the exceptions of the explanations of the power of the President, the power of Congress, and the power of the Supreme Court, there was no discussion of individual and institutional power in any of the documents in the sample. This doesn't mean that no citizenship education documents address this topic somewhere, but those in my sample did not. It does occur to me that this particular perspective of citizenship education might be a valuable addition to the content already described in this paper. As recommended in one of the documents on citizenship education, citizenship education needs to be expanded beyond government and economics. (Brown:9-13)

Question on Gallup Citizenship Test: "Who is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?" Can this person be classified as a "powerful person"? On what basis? What is the ideology associated with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?

SUMMARY

What I have attempted to accomplish in this paper is to provide several ways to look at citizenship education based upon several theories of culture. It is extremely conjectural, and may in some instances be value-laden, but an attempt none the less to determine if anthropology has anything to contribute to citizenship education. I have also attempted to suggest that the cultural diversity within a pluralistic society creates an amorphous condition for citizenship education and that the continuous attempts to resolve the conflicts associated with this condition produces a form of dynamism which has high survival value in a rapidly changing society. I also suggest that we move from myth to the reality of citizenship education through more naturalistic research. As the individual moves from membership in a tribal society to membership in a modern state and a global community, that individual's relationship to the state is altered dramatically. Citizenship education needs to take this new relationship into account.

NOTES

1. Even in modern autocratic states allegiance to a leader can be altered by "overthrowing" one dictator in favor of another leader as in the recent instances of Fernando Marcos and "Baby Doc" Duvalier. Just as in a chiefdom the modern leader needs to maintain the support of the citizen.
2. Typical among the Hopi Indians, a matrilineal society, is the responsibility of the mother's brother to assume the major role for the education and discipline of his sister's sons.
3. See Marvin Harris, COWS, PIGS, WARS, AND WITCHES, 1974, Vintage, pp 6-27 for a description of this phenomenon.

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APPENDIX A

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